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COSTUME DESIGN FOR "CHIMP"
BY ERIC NEWTON. See page 112

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.,
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PLAYS IN THE VILLAGES

SOME EXPERIENCES OF THE ARTS LEAGUE OF SERVICE

By Eleanor M. Elder.

WHAT plays are most appreciated in the villages? That is a question always asked by those who are interested in dramatic tours. I am going to try and answer that question out of the experience gained by nearly four years' touring in country districts; but villages differ so widely from one district to another and the interest in drama is spreading so rapidly that in another four years such limitations as now exist may have vanished completely.

We often make the mistake of speaking of villages as if they were populated by one class only—an uneducated working-class. This of course is pure nonsense. There is a mixture of all classes and every degree of education, and a performance that has nothing in it that appeals to the parson, squire, and schoolmistress, as well as to the farm-labourer, has failed in its mission.

One of the great advantages of a village audience is that it is neither prejudiced nor *blasé*. It is ready to accept anything that is set before it, and the simplicity of a production does not interfere with its enjoyment. But its members are not disciplined as, for instance, those of a town audience are, in the matter of how to behave in a theatre; they are very self-conscious and inclined to giggle over a love-scene on the stage. There is also a fatal tendency to link up characters on the stage with local personalities which is sometimes very embarrassing. It was owing to this that we had to omit from our repertory the very excellent little play, "Lonesome-Like," by Harold Brighouse, in which there is a well-drawn but unsympathetic part of a curate who comes to tell an old woman that she has to go to the workhouse. This tendency limits the choice of plays suitable for the villages.

Erotic or neurotic plays also would have little or no success, nor any play that strains too much the conventionalities. What may be bearable sitting amongst strangers is quite another thing when everyone in the audience is at least acquainted.

One advantage our players have is the opportunity of hearing from members of the

audience themselves kindly comments and criticisms on the merits or demerits of both plays and performers. Although the praise and censure may not always be discriminating it is none the less valuable.

We are faced with the interesting fact that there is scarcely one out of our list of twenty-five plays which has not at some time or other provoked some critical member of our audience to advise us to "cut it out," as being the one blot on our otherwise excellent programme, on the pretext that the play in question is too sad, or too farcical—childish—obscure—unreal—realistic, etc. If, like the gentleman with the ass in *Æsop's* fable, we tried to follow all the advice we got, we would soon find we had no programme left! The upshot of it all goes to prove that there is every variety of taste in the villages and that there is an audience for every kind of dramatic work.

PLAYS THAT APPEAL.

Plays that are assured of a good reception wherever they are played are those with a human touch, whether comedy or tragedy. Of our most serious work, "Riders to the Sea," by J. M. Synge, produced for us in 1920 by W. G. Fay, has had the widest and most general appeal. This play depends almost entirely on the part of Maurya—and we were fortunate in having it admirably played by Agnes Lowson. Harold Brighouse's "Price of Coal" falls also into this category, although it is naturally better appreciated in Scotland and the northern mining districts of England. Plays by Harold Brighouse, Lady Gregory, Harold Chapin and J. A. Ferguson, possessing as they do the sympathetic human touch without an atom of false sentiment, make an instantaneous appeal. "The Travelling Man" and "The Dumb and the Blind" have been very successful, although more complex than "The Workhouse Ward" or "The Philosopher of Butterbiggins." J. A. Ferguson's fine little tragedy, "Campbell of Kilmhor," would certainly be much appreciated in the villages. Unfortunately it has too large a cast for our touring com-

pany, and we have only been able to play it during our month's season in the East End of London. "Postal Orders," by Roland Pertwee, has also a universal appeal, the edition used being the first Mr. Pertwee wrote, for four female characters. It is a satirical sketch, all character study, and the plot is slight.

Shaw's "Arms and the Man" has been excellently received. This we play on the second night of a visit. There still exists so much ignorant prejudice about Shaw's writings that we are at times asked to omit it from our programme. On other occasions it is much in demand, and we have made Shaw converts in many places.

Among other plays which can be grouped under the heading of "Experimental," come "The Sun," by Galsworthy, and "The Bear," by Tchekov, both produced for us by Leslie Banks; and "The Cloak," by Clifford Bax. Although widely different they are all in the nature of a new experience to country audiences. Galsworthy's miniature drama, which says so much in so few words, leads the audience to expect a finale commonly seen on stage or film. The *dénouement*, is novel and disconcerting. However, from letters received afterwards, it was this play, along with "The Cloak," that provoked more discussion than any of the others.

"The Bear," by Tchekoff, was not so well understood in the villages, although its boisterous nature caused much laughter. Curiously enough, it was especially beloved by children. The reception of "The Cloak," by Clifford Bax, was the greatest surprise. One can hardly imagine that half-an-hour of verse with very little action, and dealing with the supernatural and the metaphysical, would appeal to more than a limited number in a country audience. The characters are an Angel, an Unborn Spirit, and One Newly Dead. The scene, "a green height among rocks," was left to the imagination, the only scenery being curtains, and the production relying for stage effects on soft lighting and a beautiful "Cloak" worn by the Newly Dead, which was designed for us by Malcolm Milne. Bax begins his play with a short Prologue that makes it possible to introduce it anywhere in the programme, and creates the right atmosphere. The number of in-

quiries from people anxious to read the play will, we hope, induce Mr. Bax to publish it before very long. At Brechin, in Forfarshire there were five applications for copies at the local stationer's next morning, one being from a milkman, who said that he had lain awake all night thinking about it.

The difficulty facing the League in the future is that of finding interesting one-act plays that will comply with the unavoidable limitations of a fit-up tour—a cast of not more than six or seven and a play of less than half-an-hour in length that does not rely on a mass of properties, complicated lighting or scenery—these being of necessity out of the question.

Any such play sent to us at 1, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C., will have our careful consideration, and if accepted, in addition to the usual royalties paid to the author we will gladly have copies of the play (if published) on sale during the performance, which will bring the author's work into touch with an ever-increasing public all over the country.

BOYS IN TWELFTH NIGHT.

The annual play given by the choristers of All Saints', Margaret Street, is an event which is long remembered and eagerly anticipated by those who are lucky enough to receive invitations. This year "Twelfth Night" was performed, and the young actors once again beckoned one into the presence of the living Shakespeare, so fresh was their approach to the play, so unconscious their skill. For these boys are, of course, highly trained. They have a considerable technique at their disposal. But they seem not to know it, and to be warbling out their lines with the natural expressiveness of birds in song. It is thus that the choir boy actors of the sixteenth century must have delighted the Great Queen.

Messrs. Joseph Williams, of 32, Great Portland Street, W., send us their new catalogues of Plays, Duologues, Operettas, etc. They contain thumb-nail plots of the plays, and other indications which should be useful to amateur societies where material conditions often have to decide the kind of play chosen for performance.

SOME RECENT BOOKS

From the Wings. By "The Stage Cat." Edited by Elizabeth Fagan. Illustrated. Collins. 10s. 6d. net.

The greatest credit should be given to Elisabeth Fagan for her admirable editing of the reminiscences of the highly cultivated quadruped who is the official author of this book. It should prove most interesting to all stage lovers. The "Cat" was at one time a well-known member of the Benson Company, and its stories of this splendid band of players are delightfully intimate and interesting. After leaving the Benson Company the author had a very interesting and varied career, sometimes in musical comedy (in which connection there is an excellent character study of George Edwardes, both amusing and revealing), afterwards acting with Penley, Mrs. Patrick Campbell—of whom there are some good stories—Sir Herbert Tree, Miss Olga Nethersole, and other famous players. The book is full of excellent anecdotes and clever character studies, and Elizabeth Fagan is to be congratulated on the manner in which she has brought together the various episodes of her story, and made from them one of the most entertaining books on the stage published for a long time.

The Bankside Acting Edition of Shakespeare. (Ed. by F. J. Harvey Darton.) Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd.

This edition, in which twelve of the plays have now been issued, is intended to help schoolchildren and amateurs generally, to act the plays of Shakespeare with real understanding of the text, and to produce them as nearly as possible in the manner of his own day, practically continuously, with the minimum of scenery, and the smallest possible number of actors. No pains have been spared to achieve these ends. Each play is prefaced by a synopsis of the plot, a helpful little bibliography, and a glossary, and each copy contains full and practical directions for arranging the stage, and selecting the cast, with sound advice on methods of acting and producing, while the stage manager is even spared the trouble of marking cues and calls, and preparing property lists.

Unpractised actors who find the unabridged plays beyond their powers will appreciate the care and judgment with which these versions have been got within the compass of two hours without the entire omission of any scene, and even producers who dislike abbreviations will find it profitable to study their play in this edition before beginning rehearsals.

The Bankside Costume Book. By Melicent Stone. Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., Ltd. 2s. 6d.

This book was written as a companion to the Bankside acting edition, and is primarily concerned with the dress, arms and ornaments of the periods covered by Shakespeare's plays. Detailed descriptions and diagrams of the typical costumes of each period are supplemented by special notes on such characters as Clowns, Elves, and Heralds. In accordance with the aim of the series, however, the author has given also clear directions for the making of these costumes much useful general information, and hints which, it is hoped, will enable the amateur company of limited resources to provide its own costumes at the lowest possible cost.

Do you Believe in Fairies? By Maude Scott. Dramatic Art Centre, Mary Ward Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C.1. 1s. 6d.

The theme of this "Christmas Play for Schools" is, briefly, the Christmas Eve vision of two children, who see Santa Claus and the Christmas Tree Fairy choosing from a procession of Spirits, among whom are Beauty, Courage, Sympathy and others, missionaries who shall convert sceptical young persons like themselves to a new belief in new fairies. Christmas is therefore rather a convenience than a necessity to the play, which is in essence a Morality suited to children, but the interludes, in which various troops of young fairies appear with singing and dancing, give opportunities for seasonable festivity, and the conscientious children who no longer believe in Tinker Bell and yet somehow cannot let her die, will feel grateful to Miss Scott for enabling them to answer Peter Pan with a truthful "Yes."



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Telephone: GERRARD, 3157.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal

IT is sometimes said by those who know nothing of the work of the British Drama League that we exist for the promotion of a kind of drama that no one wants and will certainly never pay for. The right answer to such criticism is to be found in the success of "Advertising April," the comedy by Mr. H. J. Farjeon and Mr. Horace Horsnell, which was first "discovered" by the play-reading Committee of the League, and published in the Drama League Library of Plays before ever it was accepted by the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and booked by Miss Sybil Thorne-dike. Londoners now have the opportunity of seeing for themselves this admirable play, brilliantly acted, and produced at the Criterion Theatre—the tiny hub in the circle of metropolitan play-houses. This should be an encouragement to our Play-reading Committee and to the dramatists who are good enough to favour us with their plays for reading. We hope that with the co-operation of our publishers, Messrs. Basil Blackwell, a further batch of plays may be announced before long.

As the magazine was going to press we were sorry to receive the news of the death

of Mr. A. E. Drinkwater, a veteran in the cause of the newer drama, and so closely associated with the pre-war managements of Mr. Granville-Barker, at the Kingsway Theatre, and elsewhere. For some years Mr. Drinkwater was secretary to the Stage Society, and up to a few days before his death was managing at the Regent Theatre the Birmingham Repertory Theatre's season of "The Immortal Hour." In him a devoted and honest worker is lost to the stage.

Some borrowers from the Library are omitting to send the amount due for postage. As a convenience to readers it has been decided to open postage accounts. Those who wish to do so may send a deposit of 5s. to be placed to their credit, otherwise an invoice for the amount spent on postage will be sent periodically to each borrower. Special attention is drawn to the fact that all books are borrowed from the Library at the borrower's risk, and must be replaced if lost in transit either way or while in their possession.

On February 8th and 10th, at S. Michael's Hall, Romford Road, E.12, the Kensington Players will produce "Chitra," by Rabindranath Tagore, "Michael," adapted from Tolstoy, by Miles Malleson, and "The Disruption of the Table Round," adapted from "Idylls of the King."

Since the last issue of DRAMA, the following have become affiliated to the League:—

Dramatic Art Centre

Miss Maud Scott

Edinburgh University English Literature Society

The Secretary

Helensburgh Amateur Dramatic Society

Miss Nance Anderson

Herefordshire Amateur Dramatic Society

Miss Marjorie Hatton

Liverpool Repertory Theatre

Col. J. J. Shute

Mulberry Tree Club

Miss C. J. Skelton

The Penrith Players

A. Horace Page, Esq.

The Penzance Players

R. Glave Saunders, Esq.

The Portishead Players

C. Sawden, Esq.

The St. Alphege Players

Miss Marjorie Knapp-Fisher

Southampton Drama Society

A. Fall, Esq.

THE LESSON OF OBERAMMERGAU

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

The article in your last issue on the "Lesson of Oberammergau," interesting as it was, provokes a reply. Perhaps the writer was only protesting against the exaggerations of the reviewers; but to discount the effect of the religious influence of the play on the acting and the lives of the villagers is itself an exaggeration. It is impossible to regard the play except in terms of the religious faith and devotion of the people, which have made the production what it is; that and another thing—tradition. These two, religion, and the force of a great tradition, have between them made the Oberammergau Passion Play the great artistic success we know.

The play had its origin, in the first place, in a purely religious motive—an act of thanksgiving for the cessation of a plague. And the spirit in which it began has remained unaltered. This is evidenced, among other things, by a fact not perhaps generally known, that on the days of the performances, the play takes the place of all other devotional duties, even the Sunday Mass, and I think most of us entertain a fear at the back of our minds that fame and the spirit of Mammon may eventually destroy the simple faith and devotion of the villagers and thus effect the ruin of the play itself.

This, however, is not to say that the villagers and actors are necessarily a population of "saints." They are probably neither better nor worse than the inhabitants of any other Bavarian or Tyrolian village. But it does mean that their religion is both the chief cause and the inspiration of their play as it is the paramount influence in their lives. It pervades the very atmosphere they breathe; and it exudes from the very stones of the place, a fact that may be taken literally when we consider the gaily coloured frescoes and sacred symbols that meet us at every turn. It gives the place also that strange, incomunicable charm we feel in the paintings of the old Italian masters, of which the play forcibly reminds one; and also, I think, that evident culture and dignity of manner which seems to be native to the place.

Religion of itself, it is true, would not

entirely account for the admitted excellence of the play. Tradition, as already mentioned, is also essential. We all know the force of a great tradition; how, for example a unique talent—for making pottery, perhaps, or violins—may be handed down for generations from father to son; and when we consider how the Oberammergau Play has been acted consistently for some three hundred years, it is almost impossible to exaggerate the effect of this on the lives and minds of the villagers. The tradition moreover, has been very carefully preserved. The actors are not allowed to strike out into original paths of their own, as Irving did when he re-interpreted the character of Shylock, but have to follow the traditional way; and these traditions are scrupulously maintained even in minor matters, such as in the absence of dramatic artifices, because of the spirit in which the play is approached, as a thing sacred, almost sacramental. Whether anything would be gained by making a change is a matter of opinion. The monks of Caldey in their Passion Play have discarded the costumes they used to wear in favour of their everyday habits, and the effect is said to be heightened, not diminished.

For such reasons as these it would not be easy, I think, for any village to do the same as Oberammergau. The tradition as well as the religious stimulus would be wanting; and tradition is a plant of slow growth. In time, no doubt, it might be produced; and the lesson of Oberammergau would be well learnt if it roused an effort to produce in every English village a healthy native drama. Most of us would welcome a revival, which indeed has already begun, of the old Miracle and Mystery Plays, of which the Oberammergau Passion Play is such an interesting survival; as also an end to the unnatural divorce between Church and Stage. It is true to say that the native drama should not be restricted to sacred and Biblical subjects; any event rendered memorable through history or great literature is worthy of dramatic representation. But Oberammergau itself, let us hope, will remain untouched with its one great subject supremely rendered.

F. J. BOWEN.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

THE LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE.

LIVERPOOL has possessed a repertory theatre, now called the Playhouse, which has been open continuously for 40 weeks of each year, for the last twelve years. This theatre, too, has belonged to Liverpool, in a closer sense than any other repertory theatre, to the town in which it is situated, for instead of being the property of one benefactor to keep open or close as he or she likes, it is owned by a large number of small shareholders some 1,500, no one of whom subscribed originally more than £250 and a great number less than £5. This has had its disadvantages as well as its advantages. It has meant that the theatre has not had, as say the Birmingham one has had, a single controlling mind giving personality and continuity to its work. The Liverpool theatre has been much more at the mercy of its expert advisers. If they have been good its work has been good. If they have been second-rate, its work has been second-rate. With no capital too beyond its fine building—fine internally at any rate—it has but rarely been able to do the pioneer work its first founders hoped it would achieve. Occasionally it has taken the plunge, as when it put on in Mr. Basil Dean's régime an elaborate production of Hauptman's *Hanele* and lost £800 in a fortnight. It has too often had to make good its losses over the sort of plays it was created to do by putting on others little differing from those to be found in the touring theatres, though good plays and poor plays alike have been played with a finish and sense of team work which is, and should be, the distinguishing characteristic of repertory acting.

One result of this has been that the Liverpool repertory theatre has for twelve years been an excellent school of acting for several hundred artists. It is indeed difficult today to go into any London theatre not playing musical comedy, or indeed into any in New York either, and not find there one or more actors or actresses who have received their principal training at Liverpool. J. H. Roberts, Lawrence Hanray and Estelle Winwood are such, and in another field of work Basil Dean. It must not from all this

be thought, however, that the Liverpool theatre has not at one time or another played all the ordinary modern plays by Bernard Shaw, Granville-Barker, Galsworthy, St. John Ervine, and the other modern dramatists, from the enthusiasm for whose work in the first decade of the century the repertory movement may be said to have started. It has done this, and without it Liverpool would have seen but a very small proportion of such plays. It has played a certain amount of Shakespeare, of Restoration and Georgian Comedy, as well as of modern poetical drama. It has not entirely neglected modern continental drama. But it must be confessed it has had occasionally to make money by putting on certain plays one would sooner not mention, and in doing so it must also be confessed it may have confused the less intelligent members of its audience, who may not have understood what was happening.

So much for the past up to and including last year's season, when Nigel Playfair was producer. Now, however, and thanks almost entirely to the generosity of the Chairman of the Company, Colonel Shute, a new leaf has been turned over. Last summer by the same agency the theatre itself was cleaned and re-decorated, and so made the visible symbol of its new life. Mr. William Armstrong, who ten years previously had been a leading actor in the company, was appointed producer. To this post he has brought intense artistic susceptibility and a great creative power, but combined with much Scotch shrewdness. The Board of Directors, under Colonel Shute's leadership, determined that the policy, if such it could be called, of losing on the swings and making money on indifferent roundabouts should cease, and that for a season at least we should have nothing but first-class swings. The result has not been unhopeful. We have lost but lost less, and we have steadily gained in local répute.

I think it may be said that we have had the very best company of players a repertory theatre has ever had, including among the men Herbert Lomas, James Harcourt, Meadows-White, Alfred Gray, Maurice Braddell, Herbert Linch and Hugh Sinclair, and among the women Aida Jenoure, Viola Lyel, Sybil Archdale and Muriel

Aked. The plays so far produced since we opened in October are Shaw's "Major Barbara," Lennox Robinson's "Lost Leader," Sierra's "The Romantic Young Lady" (translated by Mr. and Mrs. Granville-Barker), Galsworthy's "Family Man" and "The Sun," and last, before the Christmas play, St. John Ervine's "The Ship," for the first time it has been played. At the moment a particularly amusing and charming version of Thackeray's "The Rose and the Ring," by Harris Deans, with scenery designed by Aubrey Hammond, holds the boards with success alike among the cognoscenti and the general public.

On the whole, therefore, thanks to the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, 5,000 people a week for twelve years have been decently entertained and occasionally lifted to some considerable height above the grey atmosphere of the town. No single person can claim, and perhaps it is fortunate, that this is entirely his or her work. It has been a co-operative effort with all the advantages and disadvantages which belong to such a thing. Occasionally benefactors have stepped into the breach when it widened too desperately, like Mr. Alec Rea, of the Readean Company, and still a director, and now Colonel Shute. Indeed the latter's activities for the good of dramatic art in Liverpool have not been confined to the Repertory Theatre alone. He founded a couple of years ago the Lectureship in the Art of the Theatre at the University of Liverpool, which Mr. Granville-Barker has held with such distinction.

It may be said, then, that the Liverpool repertory theatre has represented a definite movement, and continues to do so, and fluctuates in its fortunes with the success of that movement. The quick growth in one season of its Playhouse Circle to 600 members, meeting in the theatre on Sunday nights for lectures, discussions and play readings under Mr. Granville-Barker's presidency, and pledged to support the theatre, is other evidence of this, but the main evidence must always be the continued existence of the theatre through twelve difficult years, including those of the war—a longer period, I believe, than any other similar theatre has to its credit.

C. H. REILLY.

THE PORTMADOC PLAYERS.

The Portmadoc Players first came into being on January 8th, 1923. These are our aims:—

(1). To bring together those men and women in Portmadoc and the surrounding districts who are interested in the art of the theatre, and especially to achieve a close and useful co-operation between the various existing dramatic companies by inviting them to join our society and thus form one central and comprehensive dramatic club to include all the histrionic talent of the neighbourhood.

(2). To read, and produce as artistically as we can, plays by the best authors, especially those of young Welshmen, whether writing in Welsh or in English.

(3). To encourage the serious study of the technique of playwriting, acting, and play-producing and of all those crafts which are a help towards artistic stage representation.

(4). To support enthusiastically all those who are striving towards the common ideal of a Welsh National Theatre that shall be worthy of the race and country to which we belong.

WROXHAM DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

This Society opened its third season with R. C. Carton's "Lady Huntworth's Experiment" and H. V. Esmond's "Eliza Comes to Stay," which were played for two nights each to record audiences in the Society's "home," the New Assembly Room, now needing little to make it an ideal miniature theatre. Dr. B. D. Z. Wright, the Society's President, gave a delightful rendering of the "Rev. Audrey Pillenger" in the comedy; and Miss G. Edmonds as "Eliza" in the farce was an unqualified success. The producer was Mr. C. Shaw. The Norwich critic in the *Eastern Daily Press*, says of the Wroxham players, "They are a phenomenon to be reckoned with. In farce and drawing-room comedy they are just as much entitled to consideration as the Norwich players are in the more ambitious region of the classical severities." The Society has also revived one of its most successful earlier productions, "The Cheerful Knave," which was played in aid of the Jenny Lind Hospital.

THE UNNAMED SOCIETY.

In Manchester, on Monday, January 8th, the Unnamed Society gave the first performance of the new play, "Chimp," by F. Sladen-Smith. In spite of many factors militating adversely the play was entirely successful, not a dull moment marred the action, climax followed climax, and interest was sustained until the curtain fell on the fourth and last act.

The play tells of the magical transportation of a modern youth to the court of a country that existed during a bygone period of civilization. It is shown how this product of our time is driven now willingly, now unwillingly, to interfere with the lives and work of his hosts until a climacteric state of chaos is reached. Such a theme can only be made into an artistic success by bold and imaginative treatment, and by investment with some peculiar touch of genius. In "Chimp" Mr. Sladen-Smith has so fulfilled these requirements that the success of the attempt justifies a somewhat precarious tampering with the traditions, customs and formulae of the past. Of outstanding merit is the comparative characterization: in "Chimp" each character serves his own useful purpose and says no more than is necessary to give to the play its full meaning. The author has avoided many opportunities for a display of verbiage. One weakness, however, cannot escape notice. An unsatisfactory explanation is given of the means by which the modern and the ancients understood each other's speech. As the play goes on it is not certain whether slang is or is not the only part of our language that is missed by the ancients. Explanation, if considered necessary, should leave no doubt in the mind of the audience.

The play was produced by the author. How he must have suffered! Much of the decoration was vague and inconsistent. The play demands broad effects and excess of barbaric colour. The costumes of the principal players were undoubtedly in tone with the spirit of the play, but many of the costumes and the properties suffered heavily in comparison. The fault is easily removed.

In a cast of fifteen players, excluding six slaves, five players stood out. Miss Dorothy

Crosse played with conviction the difficult part of a spoilt and viraginous princess. She had three professional lovers whose clothes were filled by actors with a deportment, using the word in its widest sense, that would have driven any woman into the arms of the nearest anthropoid ape. Mr. Eric Newton, when thrown into the gang of cut-throats, maintained nobly his insularity to the extent of sticking his hands into his pockets until obliged to remove them. He showed a very satisfying bewilderment when in conflict with forces that he, as a foreigner, mistrusted and misunderstood. Mr. Peter Bax, Mr. John Marchant, and Mr. L. Oppenheimer were all excellent in their respective parts. The production was one more demonstration of the truth of the well-worn phrase, "The play's the thing."

THE DRAMATIC ART CENTRE, MARY WARD SETTLEMENT.

This Centre, which only came into existence last September, is going ahead by leaps and bounds. Having a charming little theatre hall and stage of its own to start with, and the ordinary stage lighting, it was decided to put in an entirely new system of lighting on the lines of the Gordon Craig method. Thus the Centre now possesses what is perhaps the best-equipped amateur theatre in London.

In addition to its various classes and clubs, the Centre is now in possession of the nucleus of a permanent Repertory Company, which aims to do work of a very high standard. All plays will be produced by Miss Maude Scott, with the valuable assistance of Mr. Tomlin and Mr. Harold Ridge. The initial performance of this Company is to be given on February 12th at 8 p.m. (for particulars see back cover). There are still several vacancies for experienced amateurs keen to do artistic work, both men and women, and also for a few talented beginners. Application should be made to Miss Scott at the Mary Ward Settlement, Tavistock Place, W.C.1. She would also be interested to hear from non-acting members interested in the development of amateur dramatic work along artistic lines, and any who seek guidance in play production, or expert knowledge of the theatre.

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